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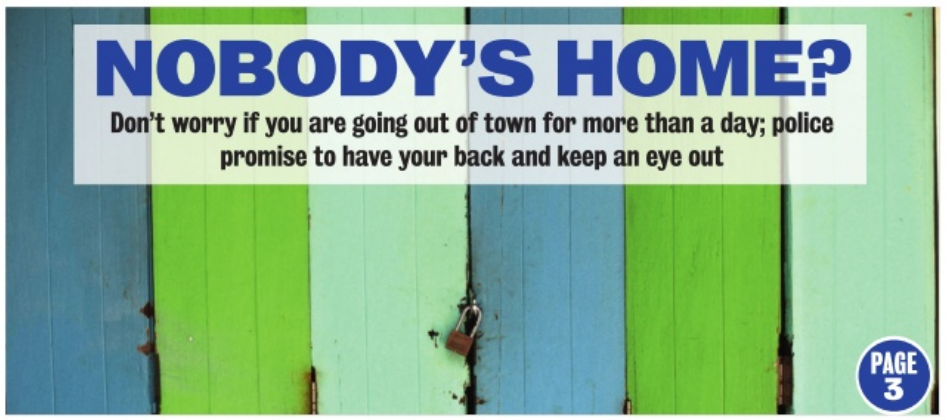
Bangalore Mirror

TEMP Max 30 | Min 17 | Humidity 29% Partly Cloudy Sensex 77,505 | Nifty 23,482 | Gold 82,100 | Silver 93,250 | Dollar 86.70 | Euro 89.69 | GBP 107.48



NOBODY'S HOME?

Don't worry if you are going out of town for more than a day; police promise to have your back and keep an eye out

PAGE 3

GRASS IS GREEN

All you need to know about the last surviving grassland in the city and latest developments that ensure its conservation

PAGE 7

Booming demand for exotic pets coupled with legal loopholes when dealing with animal smugglers has seen rise in cases; devastating consequences on environment, harm to animals just some issues with illegal trade

EXCESS BAGGAGE: IT'S A JUNGLE IN THERE

Many carriers unaware what they are carrying in their check-in baggage

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The illegal trade of exotic pets is emerging as a rampant menace, with unlikely candidates in pursuit of easy money being roped into the smuggling network. The recent arrest of two women, both in their 50s, at a Bengaluru airport for attempting to smuggle exotic birds and animals concealed in their check-in baggage from Malaysia has once again highlighted the deep-rooted nature of this illegal trade. Investigations revealed that they were working as carriers for an international smuggling syndicate, tasked with delivering the consignment to their contacts waiting outside the airport.

A growing recruitment network

Young individuals, particularly from marginalised communities, are being increasingly lured into this illicit trade, sources said. "Smuggling rings target fresh faces, offering thousands of rupees for a single trip. Once recruited, these carriers bring in new recruits, expanding the network in a systematic chain-like process," a source revealed to BM. Many of these carriers remain unaware of what they are transporting, merely following instructions given to them. The use of different individuals for every trip ensures that no one person becomes a repeated suspect, making it difficult for authorities to track them.

Besides smuggling, many of these youths eventually get involved in drugs, drawn in by the allure of quick cash and a luxurious lifestyle.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

"Smuggling rings target fresh faces, offering thousands of rupees for a single trip. Once recruited, these carriers bring in new recruits, expanding the network in a systematic chain-like process

— Wildlife activist

In deep trouble

IISc interim report reveals city's groundwater situation is grim, warns of scarcity in summer

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Will Bengaluru face a water crisis in summer like last year? It seems so, if an interim report prepared by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) is any indication. The report presents a comprehensive analysis of the city's groundwater situation, emphasising on the wards at high risk of water scarcity during summer. The report has claimed that the study combines geospatial, historical, and recent data to identify critical areas, predict trends in groundwater levels, and propose actionable recommendations for sustainable water management.

The interim report stated that around 80 wards are at a risk of severe water scarcity in the coming summer. The report predicts groundwater level to be dropped by 5 metres in core area, 10 to 15 metres in CMC (city municipal council) area and 20 to 25 metres in 110 villages that were added to the Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BMP) became Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) in 2007. According to the report, approximately 800 million litre per day (MLD) of groundwater is being drawn from borewells in the city.

The report states that areas such as

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

THINGS TO DO

01 Dance performance

Sandbox Collective presents EF_FEMININITY – trio version, a documentary dance performance **When: February 11& 12 – 7 pm Where: Shoonya, Raja Ram Mohanroy Extension, Sudhama Nagar**

02 Mix and match

'Moxy Mixology Magic', an exclusive sit-down dinner and bar takeover, featuring the celebrated mixologist Ishrat Kaur and Patrón Reposado. This is an invite-only event. Call 87929 29809 for details. **When: February 5, 7 pm onwards; Where: Moxy Bengaluru Airport**

03 History of art

Join a talk, 'Abanindranath Tagore: Reclaiming the Narrative Voice' by art historian Prof R Siva Kumar. This is a chance to explore the creative journey of the artist. **Where: National Gallery of Modern Art; When: February 7, 5:30 pm**

04 Stage is set

Ranga Vartula's National Award-winning production, RABDI, adapted from Naushil Mehta's Hindi play into Kannada, comes to Bengaluru. Limited tickets available. **Where: Rangashankara; When: February 5, 7:30 pm**

Mission successful: Cat is finally in the bag

Late-night ops by CARE team with help of BMRCL staff helps rescue kitten trapped on Metro pillar

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A late-night operation that began on Friday and finished at 2 am on Saturday, resulted in the rescue of a six-month-old kitten that was stuck on Pillar No. 186 of the Doddakallasandra Metro Station for three days. The rescue was carried out by the Tactical Rescue Team of Charlie's Animal Rescue Centre (CARE), with crucial support from Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) officials.

Meena Narayanswamy, a local resident and advocate, first noticed the kitten's desperate cries and alerted the CARE Force Team. The rescue effort was complicated because it wouldn't be possible to reach the kitten without shutting down the power lines.

Animal welfare activist Priya Chetty Rajagopal stepped in and spoke to Maheshwar Rao, MD of BMRCL, requesting assistance. He immediately directed his team to support the rescue operation.

Since shutting down power during the day would disrupt metro services, the rescue was scheduled for 11.30 pm, after metro operations had ended.

"At first, we tried using a grab pole to catch the kitten, but it was scared and kept running away," a CARE Force Team member said. The team then set up a cat trap with food near the pillar. The kitten hesitated for a while

> **"I quickly set up a trap and turned off the lights, then instructed all team members to remain silent. After 30 tense minutes, the cat got trapped** – Anil SM, CARE

but eventually entered the trap due to hunger.

"It was amazing how the BMRCL team stood by us at every step. It takes a village to save a life," said a CARE official.

Anil SM - Manager - Tactical Animal Rescue operations, described the operation as one of the challenging one he had faced. "As a tactical rescuer, I've faced a variety of challenges, but the mission to save a cat trapped in a metro pillar stands out. The cat had been stuck there for three days, and it was up to my team and me to bring it to safety."

The kitten that was rescued on Saturday is undergoing treatment and will be put up for adoption after recovery

He said the metro technical team and CARE Force Team carefully made their way onto the tracks and unlocked the technician's door where the cat was believed to be trapped. "But the moment the cat heard us open the door, it darted deeper into the tunnel, frantically running from one pillar to another. I ventured into the tunnel, discovering that the cat was hiding far from our entry point. And I quickly set up a trap and turned off the lights, then instructed all team members to remain silent. I positioned myself in the tunnel, patiently waiting for the cat to emerge. After 30 tense minutes, the cat got trapped," he said.

The kitten is now recovering at CARE, undergoing health checks and vaccinations.

Migrants' network looks at better engagement with government, employers

Meeting to share experiences of workers from Adivasi, tribal communities, explores ways to build leadership, networking

Father Samir Minj speaking at the meet organised in Bengaluru at ISI

Albert Dhan shared the memory of his mother buying provisions with the loose change she had collected in the bamboo pipes of their thatched house in Assam. With his village bordering Arunachal Pradesh facing frequent flooding, Albert moved to Bengaluru 18 years ago for better employment opportunities. Today, he works as a production manager with a private company.

Listening to Albert's story were more than 80 leaders from migrant communities in the city at a meeting organised by the Labour Migration Unit of the Indian Social Institute (ISI) on Sunday, January 20. The unit with a network of around 3,000 migrant workers spread across Bengaluru, working in different sectors, is looking at ways to step up its advocacy for migrant workers, and improve engagement with the government and employers. With fresh memories of the difficulties faced during Covid and lockdown, the participants discussed concerns on social and economic issues, education and skill development, workplace safety, health and hygiene, and legal awareness. They also explored ways to build leadership and networking within the community, and provide religious and spiritual support. In times of a distress situation, including death, severe illness or quarrel, ISI swings into action to help out the community, says Father Samir Minj, unit head. "We give the migrant worker hope," he said. From August 2024 to January 2025, the organisation has helped with procedures post the death of 16 migrant workers in Bengaluru.

> **"Some of the most pressing issues among migrant workers are the low wages, and the fact that they are easily replaceable** – Fr. Samir Minj, ISI

ISI, which began in 2017, took on a bigger role during Covid. While efforts have been localised thus far, this meeting was designed to step up cohesiveness among the smaller networks, and build a unified network which can work for migrant rights. "This particular meeting focused on Adivasi and tribal community members who come from Assam, Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh. Many of them were surprised that there were so many fellow migrants from the Adivasi and tribal communities here," said Minj, who is a Jesuit priest from Chhattisgarh, who also belongs to the tribal community.

"Some of the most pressing issues among migrant workers are the low wages, and the fact that they are easily replaceable. There is a constant sense of fear- of losing jobs, not getting salaries, and more. Not knowing the language is another issue they face," said Minj.

Dhan said that while issues like low wages, long working hours, lack of job security, lack of access to social security like health insurance and provident fund existed, there was also a lack of knowledge among members of the community even where such facilities exist. Like withdrawal of provident funds, location of Employees' State Insurance (ESI) health centres, and insurance schemes.

Through its network and community leaders, ISI plans to get the migrant workers registered under the e-Shram portal (for unorganised workers) under the Government's Labour Ministry. They can then approach the Karnataka government with data, said Minj. It's a step-by-step process, he said.

— Annie Philip

Locked & secured: Police want to keep your home safe

Initiative in South Division allows people to keep police in the loop if they are leaving town for more than 1 day

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With burglaries on the rise in the city, the South Division Police have introduced the 'Locked House Checking System', a proactive initiative aimed at safeguarding homes while residents are away. This measure focuses on preventing break-ins and thefts by ensuring enhanced police surveillance of unoccupied houses.

Several cases of burglaries were reported, such as a recent attempt by three individuals at an apartment complex, prompting the police to introduce this initiative.

Police want to emphasise that prevention is more effective than detection and strengthen home security measures before crimes occur.

How it works

Under the Locked House Checking System, homeowners can

register their unoccupied houses with the police by providing their address, contact details, and a photograph of their residence. This information is then forwarded to the local police station, ensuring regular patrols and heightened surveillance of the property.

Residents can register their homes via WhatsApp by sending a photo of their house, location, address, and contact number to the South Division Police Control Room. Those who do not use WhatsApp can call the control room landline to provide the necessary details.

Explaining the initiative, DCP South, Lokesh Jagalasar, said, "A list of registered locked houses will be shared with the respective police stations by the control room. Officers will conduct both daytime and nighttime patrols, which will be supervised by ACPs and inspectors responsible for night rounds."

Initially, police personnel were tasked with identifying and patrolling locked houses during the day while intensifying night patrols in such areas. However, this method proved inefficient, as it was impossible to cover every unoccupied house. To enhance efficiency, the police introduced a system where residents can inform authorities when they are leaving town for more than a day. This allows officers to prioritise surveillance of registered houses during both day and night patrols.

Increased patrols

Patrolling officers, especially during nighttime rounds, will routinely check registered houses to ensure they remain secure.

The South Division Police currently have 34 Hoysala patrol vehicles dedicated to improving security in the region.

As residential areas are prime targets for burglaries, the South Division, being a predominantly residential zone, has witnessed multiple cases of theft and break-ins. Given that most burglaries occur at night, special emphasis is placed on night patrols, ensuring police presence actively discourages criminal activity.

By implementing this system, the police expect to strengthen home security by deterring burglars and ensuring a rapid response to any suspicious activity. Regular monitoring of locked houses will help prevent unauthorised entry and reduce property crimes.

Whom to Contact (South Division)
WhatsApp: 9480801500
Control Room Landline: 080-22943111

Bus runs over woman thrown off scooter

A 47-year-old woman lost her life in an accident on Mysore Road near Purnima Timber Shop after being run over by a BMTC bus, after she the scooter she was riding pillion on rammed into a car door. The incident occurred around 9:45 pm on Saturday under the jurisdiction of Byatarayanapura Traffic Police.

The deceased, identified as Saroja, was riding pillion on a scooter with her husband when the accident took place. According to police, the driver of a parked car suddenly opened the door, causing the approaching scooter to collide with it. The impact led Saroja to lose balance and fall onto the road, where she was run over by a BMTC bus approaching from behind. She was rushed to Victoria Hospital, but doctors declared her to be brought dead. Authorities are investigating whether Saroja was wearing a helmet at the time of the accident. Reports suggest the couple were returning home after a function. The car driver and BMTC bus driver have been booked. **BMB**

BM Finance Fundas

In your interest: What matters most in taking a home loan is the interest rate at which you get the loan

Lower EMIs for home loan borrowers soon: RBI likely to cut repo rate

Home loan borrowers may soon get relief from high EMIs. Two years ago, the RBI went on a spree to increase the repo rate multiple times when global central banks were raising interest rates to control high inflation. However, the scenario has changed, and interest rates have started falling worldwide. It is unlikely that India will remain unaffected by this. This could be the last opportunity for fixed deposit investors to lock in their FDs at current high rates and make the most of this situation.

RBI will have to follow the global trend sooner than later

The US Federal Reserve cut the interest rate by 50 bps in September which set the ball rolling for reversal of interest rate cycle. Many global central banks have started cutting rates which led to many expecting a rate cut by RBI as well. However, RBI was late in raising rates and increased the rates by a lower quantum than other central banks.

"Loan holders may need to wait longer for rate cuts, possibly until December. If inflation stays under control, a rate cut could come. Until then, EMIs will remain at current levels," says Adhil Shetty,

CEO of Bankbazaar.com.

"The RBI's decision to keep the repo rate unchanged was expected, considering ongoing inflation concerns and global geopolitical uncertainties. However, with each MPC meeting, the likelihood of a rate cut increases, and we could see one in the coming reviews if current improvements continue," says Aman Sarin, Director & Chief Executive Officer, Anant Raj Limited.

What should home loan borrowers do?

Remember that if interest rates fall, it can lead to significant savings for home loan borrowers. When rates drop, your home loan will be affected in two ways. You can choose to maintain the same EMI despite the rate cut, which will help you pay off your loan much earlier. Alternatively, you can opt to keep the tenure unchanged and go for a reduced EMI, but this will result in paying a larger interest amount compared to the first option. Therefore, only consider reducing the EMI if you are experiencing cash flow problems.

If you wish to get the maximum benefit out of the falling interest rate cycle, then you need to make sure that your loan regime is the external benchmark-linked lending rate (EBLR). Check with your bank to know if your loan regime is under an older regime like BPLR, Base Rate or MCLR. If yes, you need to apply for a change of the loan regime to EBLR.

If you have taken the home loan from an NBFC or a housing finance company, you would not get the option to switch to EBLR. You would be better off by sticking with a lender who has a reputation of giving the most competitive rates on home loans to its existing borrowers.

If your existing home loan lender is charging a higher rate than what other lenders are offering, you can ask your lender to reprice your home loan to a lower rate. You can also consider refinancing your home loan in case your lender is not offering a lower rate.

If you are a new home loan borrower, you will automatically get the benefit of the fall in rate very soon, provided your loan is from a bank. If the loan is from an NBFC, make sure it offers a competitive rate. Even a minor reduction in interest rate may offer a big saving in the long run.

Naveen Kumar, ET Online

बैंक ऑफ़ बड़ौदा
Bank of Baroda
Play The
Masterstroke
With
Baroda Home Loan
8.40%* P.A.
Maximum Savings with Baroda Max Savings Home Loan
0.05% Interest Rate Concession for Women Borrowers
0.10% Interest Rate Concession for Gen Z and Millennials (Aged under 40 Years)
Easy Top-Up Facility Available
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Kanaka Line is right on track, to be done by 2026

K-RIDE has sped up land acquisition process for Suburban Rail Corridor-4

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The land acquisition process for Corridor-4 of the Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project (BSRP) -- Kanaka Line: Heelalige to Rajanukunte -- has commenced, giving a much-needed push to the long-pending project. The construction is expected to be completed by the end of 2026.

The Karnataka Rail Infrastructure Development Company (K-RIDE) is acquiring 48.122 acres of private land across Yelahanka, Bengaluru East, and Anekal taluks for the Kanaka Line. Meanwhile, the Railways has already handed over 115 acres, ensuring that civil works, which had been progressing at a

Official says, work on 15 minor bridges completed, while embedded Rail System construction is in progress

sluggish pace, will now gain momentum. Sources said that land acquisition for the Kanaka Line includes 25,172 sq.m. in Yelahanka and Hesaraghatta hoblis of Yelahanka Taluk, 15,918 sq m in Varthur, KR Puram, Marathahalli, and Mahadevapura hoblis of Bengaluru East Taluk, and 7,039 sq m in Attibele and Sarjapur of Anekal Taluk. In December 2023, K-RIDE awarded the construction contract for the project to L&T for

The Karnataka Rail Infrastructure Development Company is acquiring 48.122 acres of private land across Yelahanka, Bengaluru East, and Anekal taluks for Kanaka Line

₹1,040.51 crore, with a completion timeline of 30 months. Nearly 85% of the required land is already owned by the Railways, while the remaining 15% (34 acres) is privately owned.

Project progress

An official said, "Preliminary works have begun, with 15 minor bridges already completed. Embedded Rail System (ERS) construction is in progress, and geotechnical work is underway. Additionally, BSRP officials are awaiting BBMP's approval to cut trees in designated protected forest areas. The BSRP spans a total of 149.34 km, with Corridor-4 covering 46.88 km. The project will feature 8.96 km of viaducts (arch bridges) and 37.92 km of grade separators. A total of 19 stations will be built along this corridor, including two elevated stations."

Stations along line

The line will connect key locations, including: Rajanukunte, Muddanahalli, Yelahanka (Elevated Interchange), Jakkur, Hegde Nagar, Thanisandra, Hennur, Horamavu, Channasandra, Benniganahalli (Interchange), Kaggadasapura, Marathahalli (Elevated), Bellandur Road, carmelaram, Ambedkar Nagar, Huskur, Singena Agrahara, Bommasandra, and Heelalige.

Soladevanahalli Depot

Meanwhile, the tender process for the Soladevanahalli depot is in its final stage, with KPIC Projects Ltd securing the contract. This depot will serve the Mallige Corridor (24.86 km), connecting Baiyappanahalli and Chikkabanavara. Another depot near Devanahalli will be constructed for maintenance of 51 trains (306 coaches) across both corridors.

Leprosy is curable: BBMP kicks off awareness initiative

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The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) launched a 15-day awareness programme against leprosy at its clinics, primary health centres and hospitals. The BBMP staff members will distribute pamphlets among the patients who visit Namma Clinics and hospitals to create awareness on the importance of treatment for leprosy patients.

It is said that 336 cases of leprosy, including 319 multi bacillary and 17 pauci bacillari, were reported during 2024-2025 and the patients have received treatment. Multi bacillary is a type of leprosy with more than five skin lesions. A lesion means an area of damaged or abnormal tissue. Paucibacillary means a small number of anesthetic skin lesions.

The pamphlets distributed by the BBMP staff members will have the details on how leprosy spreads and what are the symptoms and how to cure it.

BBMP awareness programme on leprosy

"We launched this programme to create awareness and provide treatment to leprosy patients free of cost. Our aim is to eradicate leprosy. It can be cured if the patient avails treatment on time. The problem with leprosy is that the affected person will come to know late as it is a painless disease," said BBMP Chief Health Officer Dr Syed Sirajuddin Madani.

Welcoming the BBMP's awareness programme, Sumanahalli Leprosy Rehabilitation Training Centre Coordinator Syed Mastan Saheb said that leprosy can be cured in six months if the affected person avails of treatment on time. "The leprosy patient with less than five skin patches should take one tablet per day for six months while it needs 12 months for a patient with more than five skin patches. We are providing treatment as well as rehabilitation for leprosy patients," said Mastan Saheb.

> **"We launched this programme to create awareness and provide treatment to leprosy patients free of cost. Our aim is to eradicate leprosy**
> – Dr Syed Sirajuddin Madani, BBMP

He said the state government has reserved five percent of D Group jobs for persons cured of leprosy. "The state government offers pensions for cured persons. They are eligible to avail of Rs 12,000 from the state government to undergo surgery. They are also getting MCR footwear at cheaper rates," he said.

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Problems in your area?
Send us a picture along with specific details. And please, no phone calls or spamming

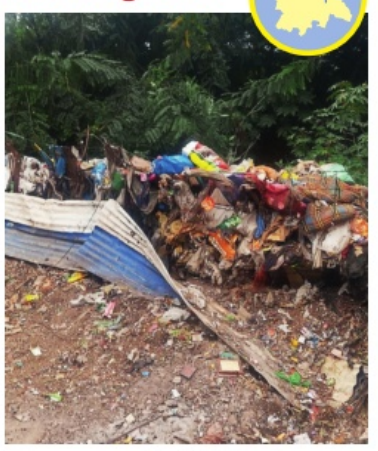
Broken path

Palm Grove Road

The footpath on Palmgrove Road, behind Hyderabad Biryani on Victoria Road, is blocked, causing inconvenience to pedestrians.

Bad stretch

Inner Ring Road


The area next to Axis Books on Inner Ring Road is poorly maintained. It is stinking and being misused as an open urinal. Residents urge MLA Harris to coordinate with ASC Defence authorities to address the issue and remove the fencing.

Unsafe box

Jayanagar

An uncovered telephone junction box at the junction of 35th Cross and 9th Main, diagonally opposite the BSNL Exchange, poses safety risks, especially to children and pedestrians. Immediate action is required.

Police excesses: Rights panel orders compensation

Inspector held accountable for misuse of position after he illegally detained businessman's assistant, seized machinery to settle private financial dispute

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The State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) has on Saturday recommended that a city-based businessman and his assistant be given Rs 2 lakh in compensation after a police inspector, formerly attached to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), was found guilty of illegally detaining them and seizing machinery to settle a private financial dispute.

The SHRC has held Inspector AD Nagaraju accountable for misusing his official position and authority in an incident that occurred in March 2021. Nagaraju, who was serving in the CID at the time, allegedly detained businessman Raju's assistant, Chandrashekhar, and forcibly seized a Digit Track machine worth Rs 12.5 lakh from their shop. The action was reportedly taken to pressure Raju into repaying Rs 15 lakh to his former business partner.

Misuse of authority, rights violation

According to officials, Raju had a financial dispute with his business associate, who sought the help of Inspector Nagaraju to recover the amount. As part of the plan, Nagaraju went to Raju's shop, but upon finding only Chandrashekhar there, he allegedly detained him and took both him and the machine to his office using an official police vehicle.

The entire episode was caught on CCTV cameras installed at the shop. SHRC officials, after investigating the complaint, found that neither a formal complaint was registered in the matter, nor did the CID have jurisdiction over the dispute. Nagaraju was found guilty of abusing his power for personal interests.

SHRC finds CID official guilty of abuse of power

SHRC officials investigate complaint and find that though neither a formal complaint was registered in the matter, nor did the CID have jurisdiction over the dispute, inspector had taken action

SHRC's action

After reviewing the case, the SHRC recommended the state government to provide Rs 1 lakh each to Raju and Chandrashekhar as compensation for the violation of their rights. Inspector Nagaraju was found guilty, and a total compensation of Rs 2 lakh was advised. The commission also called for a departmental inquiry against him, stating that the compensation should be recovered from his salary upon the inquiry's conclusion. With clear CCTV evidence supporting the claims, the SHRC ruling highlights the misuse of official vehicles, unlawful detention, and human rights violations.

Apart from this, the Director General and Inspector General of Police, Bengaluru, and officials of the Home Administration Department have been advised to examine the attached witness statements and supporting documents, frame a charge sheet, and provide an opportunity for both parties to present their case in a departmental inquiry.

The recommendation was issued under Section 18(e) of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, instructing the relevant authorities to submit a compliance report to the Commission within a month of receiving it, no later than March 12, 2025.

2 arrested for 2-wheeler thefts

The Puttenahalli police arrested two persons involved in two-wheeler thefts and recovered four stolen vehicles worth Rs 2.10 lakh. A case was registered after a resident of JP Nagar 7th Level filed a complaint on January 26, stating that his parked two-wheeler was stolen from outside his house on the night of January 21.

Following an investigation, the police arrested two suspects on January 28 near Jaraganahalli Park in JP Nagar 6th Stage. During interrogation, the accused confessed to stealing the vehicle and admitted to committing similar thefts across the city. Based on their information, three more stolen two-wheelers were found abandoned in a vacant lot behind a temple.

Among the recovered vehicles, three were linked to cases registered at Puttenahalli Police Station and one at JP Nagar Police Station. The accused have been remanded to judicial custody and further investigations are underway. **-BMB**

Serial phone snatcher held

The Chandra Layout Police have arrested a habitual offender involved in mobile phone snatching and recovered eight stolen devices worth Rs 1.27 lakh. The case dates back to August last year, when a BCC Layout resident filed a complaint stating that two individuals on a scooter had snatched his mobile phone while he was walking near his house.

During the investigation, police analysed CCTV camera feeds before identifying and detaining a juvenile suspect from Padarayanapura, JJ Nagar. Upon questioning, the juvenile confessed to the crime and revealed the identity of his accomplice. He was later released with a warning as per legal procedures.

Acting on this lead, police tracked down and arrested the main accused on January 24 near his residence at 6th Cross, JJ Nagar. Upon interrogation, he admitted to multiple phone snatchings across the city. Initially remanded to five days of police custody, he later led officers to seven more stolen phones. **-BMB**

KSLU told to make norms for exams

The High Court has instructed the Karnataka State Law University to establish fresh guidelines, incorporating provisions for equipping examination invigilators and flying squad members with body cameras to prevent examination misconduct and protect students' interests. The Court specified that high-resolution body cameras must feature real-time video recording capabilities and server upload functionality to prevent tampering and enable verification when malpractice allegations arise.

Justice Suraj Govindaraj issued these directives whilst approving a petition by Rahul HM, a law student. The petitioner challenged KSLU's actions against him in July 2024, claiming he was forced to sign pre-written documents admitting to examination misconduct.

The Court noted numerous petitions regarding KSLU's examination procedures, where students reported being compelled to sign pre-typed admission statements. **-BMB**

44 forest fire incidents across state last week

Experts suggest dept build better rapport with villagers to prevent man-made fires

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In just over two weeks, the number of large forest fire incidents in Karnataka has skyrocketed. While five incidents were recorded in the state between January 6 and January 12, as many as 44 large fire incidents have been recorded by the Forest Survey of India in the last week. The number of fire alerts in forest areas has also gone through the roof. As many as 105 fire alerts were recorded in a week during mid January. This number has crossed the 500 mark in the last seven days. The numbers have been highlighted by FSI using spatial information through SNPP.

After Karnataka (555), the second highest number of fire alerts has been recorded in Uttarakhand (204), followed by Himachal Pradesh (193), Madhya Pradesh (188), and Maharashtra (187).

In the given period last year, FSI recorded 311 forest fire alerts in Karnataka. Upon enquiring, Karnataka Forest Department in January had attributed these alerts to the ongoing fire line creation process, part of the preparation activity to deal with forest fire incidents in the upcoming fire season.

According to experts, while some of the alerts captured in satellite imagery maybe due to fire line creation, man-made fire incidents have started in many areas. However, lack of coordination and trust between KFD officials and villagers, a major reason leading to fire incidents. Experts opine that the department should look at building better rapport with villagers.

File photo of a fire in Bandipur forest; while 5 incidents were recorded in the state between January 6 and January 12, last week 44 incidents were recorded by the Forest Survey of India

"Apart from a large fire near Mudigere in Chikkamagalur, reports of fire incidents have started coming in from other areas such as Arsikere in Hassan. While some of the alerts by SNPP may be fire lines, disgruntled villagers have already started setting forests on fire. The forest department should focus on building trust among villagers. Man-made fire incidents are mostly reported from Chamarajanagar, BRT, Bandipur, and Chikkamagalur regions. The department should conduct more outreach activities in these areas," said an activist.

> **"Man-made fire reported from BRT, Chamarajanagar, Chikkamagalur and Bandipur regions. More outreach activities are needed in these areas** – Activist

According to Joseph Hoover, a former State Board for Wildlife member and founder of the United Conservation Movement and Charitable Trust, KFD should focus on reaching out to religious heads and panchayat officials in villages in and around forest areas since most of the fire incidents are deliberate.

"We have been writing to religious and spiritual heads in villages abutting forest areas requesting them to appeal to the people to not start a fire deliberately. The department should consider this option and approach preachers. However, it is equally important to rope in Gram Panchayat officials in awareness activities too," said Hoover.

Sahaja Yoga session held in city

Spiritual seekers gathered at the Samarthanam Art Center Auditorium in HSR Layout on Saturday for the "Aatmaanubhuti" event organised by 'The Life Eternal Trust', Bengaluru. Dr. Manoj Kumar, Chairman,The Life Eternal Trust Bengaluru, said Sahaja Yoga is a unique meditation technique founded by Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi in 1970. Sahaja Yoga is based on an experience called 'Self Realisation' which a person can feel through 'Kundalini Awakening'. Kundalini is the residual Divine energy inside the Sacrum Bone in the human Subtle System. People can experience the feeling of a cool breeze on their hands as well as on the top of their head. Sahaja Yoga meditation is highly scientific and is being practised in more than 160 countries across the globe. Sahaja Yoga enables us to go beyond our mental, emotional and physical activity to experience our true self within.

The programme featured a vocal performance by renowned vocalist Shri Kumaram Iyer, a musical performance by Team Sunadha, the well-known band from Samarthanam Trust for the Disabled, and a dance presentation by students of Preeti Sandur from Natarang School of Dance.

Sahaja Yoga meditation is highly connected with the Human Subtle System and by listening to the music during meditation, one can experience peace and attain a stress free state through Thoughtless Awareness. Sunanda the Arts and Culture Vertical of Samarthanam encourages artistic talent among people with disabilities by imparting training in dance and music. Programme was presided over by Chief Guests Sri Dilip Kumar Das, IFS (retd), Dr. Yathindra Lakkanna, Director - NIFT Bengaluru, Dr. Mahantesh G K, Chairman - Cricket Association for Blind in India (CABI), Former President - World Blind Cricket Ltd (WBC).

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Role reversal

In a plot twist no one saw coming, the usual narrative of state ministers crying foul over neglect by the Centre has flipped on its head with Union Ministers and MPs from Karnataka, from JDS and BJP, accusing the State Government of "ill-treatment". Take Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy's public meeting at Ambedkar Bhavan in Mandya, for instance. The guest list was missing some key players – the Deputy Commissioner, ZP CEO, and SP. And during his visit to Nanjangud for a temple visit, he found the guest house locked. Then there's Central Minister V Somanna, who had his own struggles in Tumakuru, initially facing a tough time securing a place to open his office. When asked about it, Kumaraswamy said, "I've suggested the issue of defection be brought up. Dr. CN Manjunath and V Somanna have faced a lack of response in their constituencies. I've experienced it too. Both the state and central governments need to work together. How can we develop if state leaders keep throwing roadblocks?"

Paper bribe

It's not uncommon for government officials to ask for money to get things done, but one officer took it to a whole new level. After completing his work, he demanded two bundles of A4-sized white paper from a farmer. A farmer from Somalapura, Channabasava, had applied for a land record form for his property. After receiving the record, the Assistant Director (ADLR) of the office allegedly asked the farmer to bring two bundles of A4 paper before completing the process. This demand didn't sit well with the farmer, who quickly brought the matter to the attention of KRS party leaders, who decided to show up in full force at Sindhanur Mini Vidhan Soudha recently carrying two bundles of paper as a symbol of protest.

Real pressure

Usually, it's the students who are feeling the heat to score well in their SSLC exams, but this time, it's the officials who are under the microscope! The education department is sweating it out trying to boost results after last year's sudden slump. Pressure is so high, officials are now under a major push to improve the numbers before the annual exams roll around. For example, Vijayanagar district, which had scored a respectable 91.41% in 2023, dropped to 65.61% in 2024, leaving officials scrambling to fix the situation. From surprise transfers to new strategies, everyone's working overtime. District In-charge Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan told officials, "We expect an improvement in the results this time. The officials need to step up and make sure we meet the 85% target." DDPI Venkatesh Ramachandrappa added, "We are putting in continuous effort for better results, and we are optimistic that the hard work will pay off. All necessary measures are being taken to ensure improvement in the SSLC outcomes."

Dig at officials

In a fiery exchange during the recent KDP meeting, MLA Iqbal Hussain launched a scathing attack on the Forest Department, questioning their inaction over wild elephant attacks in the region. "How many more lives do you plan to let these elephants take?" the MLA questioned. The MLA criticised the department for their selective approach to rules and regulations. Highlighting the deaths caused by rogue elephants and the failure to capture a leopard despite repeated instructions to set up traps, he sternly reminded officials of their priorities."First, serve the people and save lives. Then, worry about enforcing your laws," warned Hussain.

Goa calling

Goa, once the ultimate haven for men seeking affordable beach fun, is now stealing the show with its wallet-friendly bus fares, making it even more irresistible for men as women are entitled for free bus travel in Karnataka state transport corporation buses. After Karnataka hiked its bus fares, Goa's rates are practically a steal, with a Rs 10-13 difference at the border. Plus, there's no crowd-crushing chaos, and you're almost guaranteed a seat, making Goa buses a favourite for those crossing over. Oh, and don't even get started on the alcohol—beer is up to Rs 100 cheaper in Goa, and petrol prices are lower too, with many driving over 20-30 km just to fuel up in the sunshine state. While Goa's buses might not be as fancy as Karnataka's, the savings are too good to pass up, especially when a bus ride from Karwar to Ankola in Karnataka will cost you Rs 57, but in Goa, it's just Rs 44—saving a neat Rs 13! **— Sridhar Vivan**

BM SIMPLY PUT

Hesaraghatta Grassland

A scenic view of the Hesaraghatta Grasslands

Today, we tell you all you need to know about 5,678-acre pristine lands in Yelahanka

The State Cabinet recently approved the declaration of Hesaraghatta Lake and its surrounding areas as the 'Greater Hesaraghatta Grassland Conservation Reserve' under Section 36(A) of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. This move aims to protect 5,678 acres of grassland in Yelahanka North Taluk, Bengaluru Urban District.

Who Approved It?

The State Wildlife Board, chaired by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, first approved the proposal on October 7, 2023. The cabinet officially confirmed it last week, granting it protected status.

Where Is It Located?

The conservation reserve covers Hesaraghatta Lake, Byatha Lake, and other water bodies in the area, which are crucial for migratory birds, native flora and fauna, and Bengaluru's water supply.

Why Is There Opposition from Locals?

Despite its ecological benefits, the move has triggered strong opposition from local farmers, panchayat leaders, and Kannada cultural organisations.

Lack of Consultation: Protesters claim that the government did not consult local farmers and gram panchayats before finalising the decision.

Impact on Farmers: Farmers fear that restricting land use could affect their livelihoods, accusing the government of attempting to exploit their lands.

Flawed Survey Process: Critics argue that the government failed to conduct a proper survey before declaring the area a protected reserve.

Concerns Over Outsider Influence: Protesters allege that NGOs and external organizations are pushing the decision, without understanding the ground realities faced by local farmers.

Why Is This Project Crucial to Bengaluru?

Ecological Significance: The grassland supports 133 bird species, 40 native plant varieties, and rare wildlife, including leopards, jackals, and wildcats.

Water Security: Hesaraghatta Lake has historically been a key water source for Bengaluru, making its conservation vital for the city's future water needs.

Biodiversity Conservation: Protecting one of Bengaluru's last remaining natural grasslands ensures the survival of diverse bird and insect species.

Curbing Encroachments & Illegal Activities: The designation as a conservation reserve will prevent land encroachments and illegal poaching in the area.

AI-based non-invasive autopsy at Victoria Hospital

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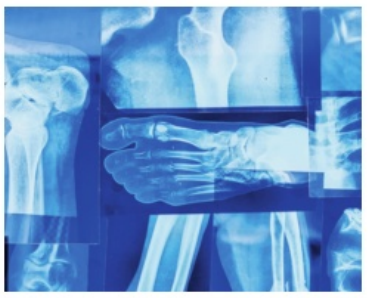
The Victoria Hospital, the state's largest government hospital, is set to introduce Virtopsy, an advanced technology that enables post-mortem examinations without dissection. This marks a big milestone as Victoria Hospital will become the first government hospital in South India to adopt this cutting-edge technology. The Department of Medical Education has already initiated the tender process.

What is Virtopsy?

An official said, "Virtopsy, a combination of 'Virtual' and 'Autopsy,' is a non-invasive post-mortem method that uses imaging technologies such as Computed Tomography (CT scan) and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) to examine the body. The captured images are processed into 3D reconstructions, allowing for a detailed internal examination without the need for traditional dissection. The estimated cost of implementing this technology is between Rs 2 to Rs 3 crore." Experts said that traditional autopsies often fail to detect minor fractures, blood clots, or micro-injuries, but radiological examinations using Virtopsy help identify these subtle changes more accurately. So far, this technology has been implemented in three major institutions in India—AIIMS, New Delhi, St. John's Medical College, Bengaluru, and NEIGRIHMS, Meghalaya.



Advantages of virtopsy

- A non-invasive method that eliminates the need for surgical incisions
- Speeds up the post-mortem process compared to traditional autopsies
- Detects hairline fractures and micro-injuries often missed in manual examinations
- Produces digital records that are legally admissible as court evidence
- Offers a less intrusive option, addressing religious concerns about autopsies
- Reduces the risk of infection transmission for morgue staff

Victoria Hospital conducts over 3,000 autopsies annually. Virtopsy cannot entirely replace traditional autopsies. In cases of natural deaths, poisoning, homicide, and suicide, forensic experts may need to remove specific organs for histopathological examinations. Dr K Ramesh Krishna, Director and Dean of Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute, confirmed that the tender for the system has been finalised.

HC rejects plea for SC/ST, OBC quota in advocates' association

The Karnataka High Court rejected two petitions on Saturday that sought reservations for SC/ST and OBC candidates in the governing council of the Advocates Association, Bengaluru (AAB).

Justice R Devdas rejected the petitions submitted by the All India Backward Classes Advocates Foundation and Karnataka SC/ST Backward Classes and Minorities Advocates Federation, advising the petitioners to approach the Supreme Court instead. The petitioners had sought similar consideration as the recent Supreme Court directive that mandated AAB to reserve 30 percent seats for women lawyers in its governing council.

The High Court clarified that the Supreme Court's directions were issued under Article 142 of the Constitution. Since AAB's existing bye-laws lack provisions for caste-based reservation, the High Court stated it cannot issue similar directives under Article 226.

The Court acknowledged the petitioners' argument that AAB has never had SC/ST/OBC office bearers, and since it implemented women's reservation, similar provisions could be made for SC/ST and OBC candidates.

The Court observed, "The Advocates Association, Bengaluru is a body that has members from the Bar and also receives funds from the State. The petitioners submit that when once decision is taken by AAB to provide reservation for women it has enabled provision for reservation and therefore, all reservation provided in the Constitution, be it vertical or horizontal, will have to be provided."

The Court refrained from commenting on AAB's resolutions implementing the Supreme Court order, suggesting that petitioners seeking similar benefits should approach the Supreme Court. On January 24 this year, the Supreme Court had instructed AAB to ensure 30 percent reservation for women lawyers in its governing council. A Bench comprising Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh had additionally directed AAB to exclusively reserve the treasurer's position for women candidates.

-Rachana Ramesh

Tiger conservation is India's success story

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India has achieved significant success in conserving its tiger population, even as global wildlife numbers continue to decline. A new study published in Science reveals that India's tiger population has increased by 30% over the past two decades, making it one of the most successful wildlife conservation efforts in the world.

Despite having the highest human population in tiger habitats and rapid urbanisation, India managed to balance conservation strategies, protected areas, and community involvement to ensure survival of tigers.

Since 2006, the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), State Forest Departments, and conservation NGOs have worked together to track tiger populations. They have monitored 320,000 sq km of forests every four years, studying tiger numbers, their prey, habitat, and human impact. Between 2006 and 2018, India's tiger habitat expanded by 30%, with tigers now occupying around 1,38,200 sq km.

While protected tiger reserves remain crucial, tigers have also recolonised multi-use forests, where they share space with humans and livestock. The study highlights that socio-economic factors play a key role in tiger population growth. Community-led conservation has also contributed to this success.

According to the research, India's

tiger conservation strategy follows a dual approach of land sparing and land sharing. Land sparing involves creating human-free protected areas, where tigers can breed and thrive without disturbances. These reserves are crucial for sustaining tiger populations, with 85% of breeding tigers found in such areas. At the same time, land sharing allows tigers to disperse and survive in forests also used by humans. By maintaining wildlife corridors that connect different tiger populations, this approach ensures that tigers can move freely between habitats, reducing inbreeding.

"Protected areas have allowed sustenance of 85% of breeding populations. These source populations facilitated through corridors and sustainable land-use practices have enabled tigers to disperse and expand into multi-use forests. Tigers now coexist with over 66 million people, proving coexistence possible," said Yadvendradev Jhala, INSA Senior Scientist at NCBS, Bangalore, and Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun.

The success is also due to strong laws, including the Wildlife Protection Act, the Forest Conservation Act, and efforts by the National Tiger Conservation Authority.

Despite this success, experts warn that large parts of tiger habitat remain empty. Scientists recommend expanding protected areas and wildlife corridors, strengthening anti-poaching efforts, supporting sustainable livelihoods for people living near tiger habitat and improving human-wildlife conflict mitigation using early warning systems and rapid response teams. "As the world grapples with biodiversity loss and climate change, India's tiger story reminds us that protecting apex predators is not just about saving one species—it is about securing the intricate web of life that sustains our planet," says Jhala.

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Carriers often booked under Customs laws

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The trade, therefore, not only threatens but also fuels other forms of organised crime, they warned.

Impact on local biodiversity

The smuggling of exotic species has devastating consequences on the local environment. In one such case, a Red-Eared Slider turtle, a species native to North America, was brought into the country as a pet. However, as the turtle grew, its owners found it difficult to manage, particularly as it became aggressive during tank cleaning. As a result, it was released into a local lake. This species is highly invasive and preys on native aquatic life, leading to significant biodiversity disruptions.

Similar cases of abandoned exotic pets have been reported, where their introduction into local ecosystems poses a serious ecological threat.

In another incident, a Ball Python, an exotic snake species,

escaped from its owner's custody and was run over by a vehicle in Indiranagar. Such cases are becoming more frequent, highlighting the dangers of keeping exotic pets without proper knowledge or facilities for their care.

Law enforcement challenges

Custom officials at Indian airports have intercepted numerous cases of smuggled exotic animals. In one instance, a King Cobra from Thailand was discovered inside a passenger's baggage. The reptile, which lacks an available anti-venom in India, did not survive the ordeal.

Despite such interceptions, legal enforcement remains weak. Carriers caught smuggling exotic animals are often booked under customs laws, which impose fines rather than long-term imprisonment.

This leniency allows offenders to return to smuggling with ease. The Wildlife Protection Act, which mandates stringent punishment with non-bailable imprisonment of three to seven years, is rarely applied in these cases. Experts argue that stricter enforcement of wildlife protection laws is crucial to curbing the menace.

The booming demand for exotic pets, coupled with lack of enforcement, continues to fuel this illegal trade. While authorities make seizures and arrests, the root problem persists, lack of awareness among buyers and the ease with which smuggling networks recruit vulnerable youths.

Around 80 wards at risk of severe water scarcity this summer

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Bommanahalli, Bommasandra, BTM Layout, Electronic City, HSR Layout, Koramangala Madiwala in South-East Bengaluru and many areas in and around Whitefield are to face the shortage of water.

The report said that continued extraction without intervention will exacerbate shortages in critical wards.

However, Vishwanath S, a water expert, said some of the areas mentioned in the report may not face such issues. "The interim report has wrongly mentioned some of the areas, which never faced water crisis, as critical areas.

For example, Jakkur ward. The report does not mention the names of the wards Varthur or Bellandur which are known for water scarcity in summer. The Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) must have a ground water management cell and authorities must install water meters for all borewells in the city. It will help us measure how much water is being drawn from borewells," said Vishwanath.

Emphasising on the need to have a monitoring mechanism in the BBMP on augmentation of water in the city, Dr M Inayathulla M, Director of Water Institute, UVCE, Bangalore University, said that water scarcity is a routine affair in summer. "The BBMP has started water augmentation through borewells. However, no efforts are being made to recharge those borewells. The BBMP should have the facility to monitor and re-charge the borewells," Dr Inayathulla said.

Wards labelled critical in report

The following is the list of critical wards as per the IISc report: Jakkur, Thanisandra, Kodigehalli, Dodda Bommasandra, Kuvempu Nagar, Shettihalli, Mallasandra, Bagalkunte, T Dasarahalli, Sanjay Nagar, Hebbal, Vishwanath Nagenahalli, Nagavara, Horamavu, Ramamurthy Nagar, Kammanahalli, Kadugondanahalli, Kushal Nagar, Kaval Byrasandra, Manorayana Palya, Yeshwanthpura, Chokkasandra, Dodda Bidarakallu, Nandini Layout, Muneshwara Nagar, Lingarajapura, Vijinagapura, Hoodi, A Narayanapura, CV Raman Nagar, Mahalakshmipuram, Laggere, Rajagopal Nagar, Hegganahalli, Herohalli, Shakthi Ganapathi Nagar, Shankar Mutt, Sarvagna Nagar, Vignana Nagar, Garudacharpalya, Kadugodi, Hagadur, Marthahalli, Shivaji Nagar, Gandhinagar, Subash Nagar, Dayananda Nagar, Vrishabavathi Nagar, Keveripura, Neelasandra, Binnypet, Kempapura Agrahara, Hosahalli, Maruthi Mandir, Moodalapalya, Nagarabhavi, Ullal, Bapuji Nagar, Padarayanapura, Jagajivanaram Nagar, Rayapuram, Chalavadipalya, Azad Nagar, Ejipura, Hanumantha Nagar, Srinagar, Gali Anjaneya Temple, Hosakerehalli, Katriguppe, Gurappanapalya, Madiwala, Bommanahalli, Chikkalsandra, Yelachenahalli, Jaraganahalli, Puttenahalli, Hongasandra, Mangammanapalya, Gottigere, and Konanakunte.

HEALTH TIP: Prioritise a diet rich in whole foods, fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins, while avoiding excessive caffeine or sugary snacks

Meditation can lower cortisol levels, improve emotional regulation, and enhance focus

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Can aching joints really predict weather?

Exploring science behind stormy debate

For centuries, people have claimed that their aching joints can predict changes in the weather, often reporting increased discomfort before rain or cold fronts. Given the scale and duration, there is a sense of legitimacy to these anecdotes – but this phenomenon remains scientifically contentious.

From shifts in barometric pressure to temperature fluctuations, many theories attempt to explain how environmental factors might influence joint pain. But is there an anatomical basis for this claim, or is it simply an enduring weather-related myth? Are our joints any more reliable than the Met Office?

At the heart of this debate lies barometric pressure, also known as atmospheric pressure – the force exerted by air molecules in the Earth's atmosphere. While invisible, air has mass, and the "weight" pressing down on us fluctuates with altitude and weather systems.

Higher barometric pressure often signals fair-weather conditions with clear skies and calm winds, whereas lower pressure typically precedes unsettled weather, such as cloudy skies, precipitation and humidity.

Moveable joints are intricate structures cushioned by synovial fluid, the viscous liquid that lubricates joints, and encased in capsules rich in nerve endings. In healthy joints, these components should allow smooth, pain-free movement. However, when joints are compromised by cartilage damage (as in osteoarthritis) or inflammation (as in rheumatoid arthritis), even subtle changes in the environment may be acutely felt.

One leading hypothesis suggests that changes in barometric pressure may directly influence joint discomfort. When atmospheric pressure drops ahead of storms, it can allow inflamed tissues within joints to expand slightly, increasing stress on surrounding nerves and amplifying pain. Conversely, rapid increases in pressure, characteristic of fair-weather systems, may compress already sensitive tissues, leading to discomfort in some people.

Scientific studies offer some support for these claims, though results remain mixed. For instance, a 2007 study published in the American Journal of Medicine found a slight but significant correlation between dropping barometric pressure and increased knee pain in osteoarthritis patients. However, this pattern is not universally observed across all joint conditions.

A 2011 systematic review in Arthritis Research & Therapy examined the relationship between weather and pain in rheumatoid arthritis patients. It revealed highly variable responses: while some people reported increased pain under low-pressure conditions, others noted no change. A few even experienced discomfort during high-pressure fronts.

> **Shifts in barometric pressure or temperature fluctuations -- theories explain how environment may influence joint pain, but is there an anatomical basis for this claim?**

More recently, a [2019 citizen-science project] called Cloudy with a chance of pain used app-based pain tracking to explore this connection. The study found a modest association between falling pressure and heightened joint pain, but it also highlighted substantial individual differences in how people perceive weather-related pain.

These findings suggest that while changes in barometric pressure may influence joint pain for some, responses are far from uniform and depend on a complex interplay of factors, including the individual's underlying joint condition and overall pain sensitivity.

Why responses differ

Barometric pressure rarely acts in isolation. Fluctuations in temperature and humidity often accompany pressure changes, complicating the picture.

Cold weather can have a pronounced effect on joints, particularly in people with existing joint conditions. Low temperatures cause muscles to contract and become stiffer, which can lead to reduced flexibility and a greater risk of strain or discomfort.

Ligaments, which connect bones to one another, and tendons, which anchor muscles to bones, may also lose some of their elasticity in colder conditions. This decreased pliability can make joint movement feel more restricted and exacerbate pain in conditions like arthritis.

Cold weather can also cause blood vessels to narrow — particularly in the extremities, as the body prioritises maintaining core temperature. This reduced blood flow can deprive affected areas of essential oxygen and nutrients, slowing the removal of metabolic waste products like lactic acid, which may accumulate in tissues and exacerbate inflammation and discomfort.

For people with inflammatory conditions, the reduced circulation can aggravate swelling and stiffness, especially in small joints like those in the fingers and toes.

Cold also slows the activity of synovial fluid. In lower temperatures, the fluid becomes less effective at reducing friction, which can heighten joint stiffness and make motion more painful, particularly for people with degenerative conditions such as osteoarthritis.

Sudden temperature changes may also play a role. Rapid shifts can challenge the body's ability to adapt, which might worsen pain in people with chronic conditions. Similarly, high humidity can intensify sensations of heat or dampness in already inflamed areas, further complicating the experience of pain.

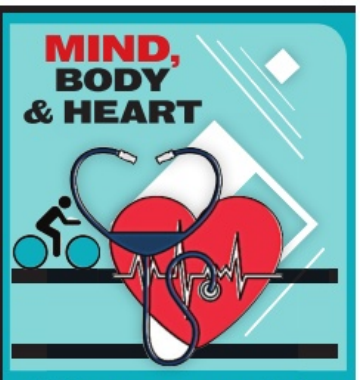
However, isolating a single variable – whether humidity, temperature or pressure –proves difficult because of the interplay of overlapping factors.

Responses to weather also depend on individual factors, including the extent of joint damage, overall pain sensitivity and psychological expectations. This variability makes it difficult to link a single meteorological factor to a biological response.

Still, the evidence suggests that people with joint conditions tend to be more attuned to environmental changes, particularly pressure fluctuations.

While the relationship between weather and joint pain remains an imperfect science, the collective evidence indicates that there may be some truth to the age-old belief. For those with chronic joint conditions, shifts in barometric pressure and accompanying weather changes might indeed serve as nature's warning system – albeit one that's far from foolproof.

(By Michelle Spear, University of Bristol, The Conversation)



All you need to know about...

Benefits of milk

Helps Prevent Heartburn
Various foods in our diet are usually more acidic and spicy in nature and can lead to acidity and stomach woes. It's advised to have a glass of milk after such a meal. Studies suggest milk has a cooling effect that coats the stomach lining and oesophagus against heartburn.

Helps Skin Glow
While drinking milk isn't always a favourable option, it usually is the combining agent in creating several homemade skin masks that help your skin achieve a glow like no other. It's said to have purifying properties and packs in a lot of natural moisturisers, as per a report in the Times Of India. Moreover, reports also suggest that milk has a lightening effect on the skin.

Helps Fight Diseases
Calcium helps your heart pump by giving your muscles the ability to contract. With that in mind, a glass of milk can keep fatal diseases like high blood pressure and the possibility of having a stroke at bay. Moreover, lactose in the milk helps your liver reduce the production of bad cholesterol.

Helps Fight Depression
Adequate levels of Vitamin D maintain the production of serotonin, a hormone associated with mood, appetite and sleep. A 2020 research has recently found that sometimes the feeling of depression can be linked back to a deficiency of Vitamin D in the body. Milk is fortified with Vitamin D boosters by manufacturers and can help aid in getting out of a low mood.

Makes teeth healthy
Most of the calcium in our body comes from our bones and teeth. And for the latter, there is nothing better than milk, be it to make it stronger or to prevent damage. Reposts suggest that drinking a cup of milk a couple of times a day could help prevent cavities and tooth decay. **–Femina**

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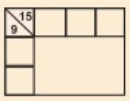
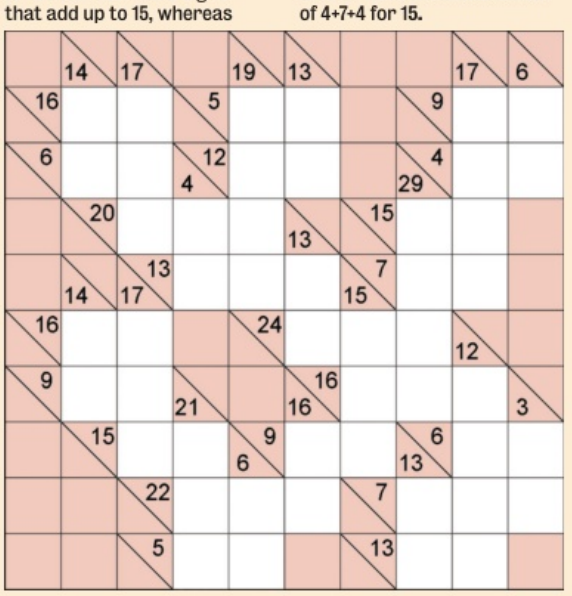
Kakuro

The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas

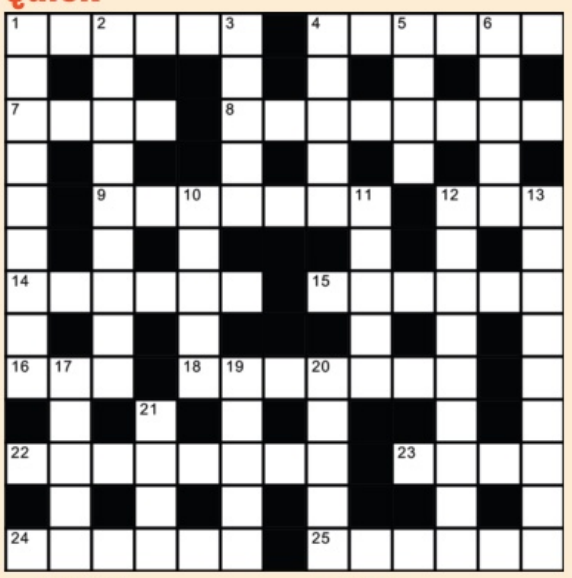


for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.

Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 Exposing for drying (6)
4 Fame, renown (6)
7 Ballet skirt (4)
8 God (8)
9 Style of cooking (7)
12 Town in Ladakh (3)
14 Violated a law of God (6)
15 Mystical (6)
16 Run a tab (3)
18 Interlaced (7)
22 Judging standards (8)
23 Able was I, ___ __ saw Elba ? (3,1)
24 Published, put out (6)
25 Sidesteps (6)

DOWN

1 Appetiser (9)
2 Taciturnity (9)
3 Football players score them (5)
4 Scientist Dr. C. V.___ (5)
5 Young attendant (4)
6 Designation (5)
10 Bumbling (5)
11 To be outstanding (5)
12 Washed and ironed? (9)
13 Aimed or done carelessly? (3-2-4)
17 Bangalore is divided into 225 ____ (5)
19 Bitterly pungent (5)
20 Assign a rating to (5)
21 You too in Latin (2,2)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: D EQUALS G

EIK QCJE MKBHOWOCZJ ARG CH IRBQOLD R XRZJK XCLJOJEJ CH WKHKLWOLD OE WKSOPKBREKSG AOEI HRZSEG RBDZQKLEJ.

Linemaro

You are someone's 'the one that got away'

Mindchow

It is defeat that turns bone to flint; it is defeat that turns gristle to muscle; it is defeat that makes men invincible

Joke of the day

God damn auto correct...
Always making me say things I didn't Nintendo

Loop

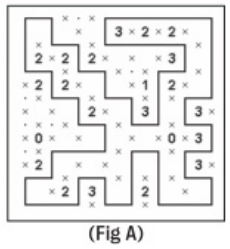
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

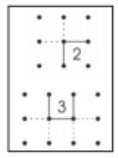
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

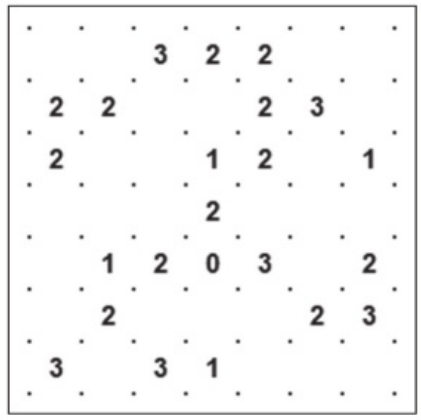
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



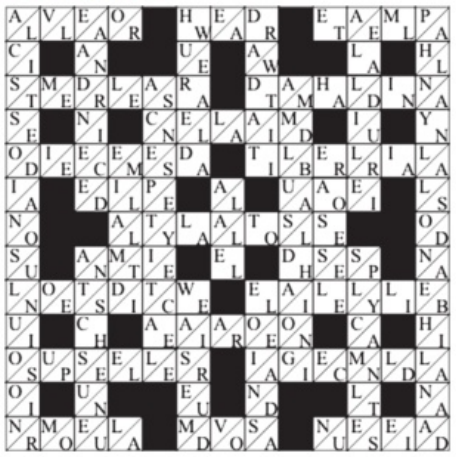
(Fig A)



(Fig B)
Not Allowed



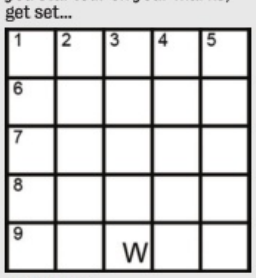
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

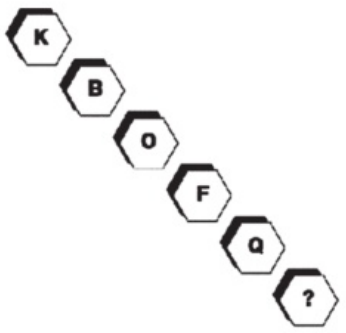
1 Curbs; 6 Plane;
7 SOS Al; 8 A true;
9 Dot we

DOWN

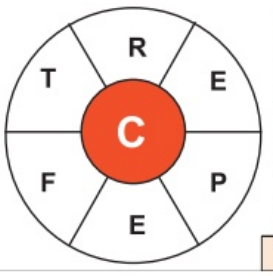
1 Stoup; 2 Coral;
3 Wears; 4 Tune I;
5 Beads

Mensapuzzle

Which letter completes the puzzle?



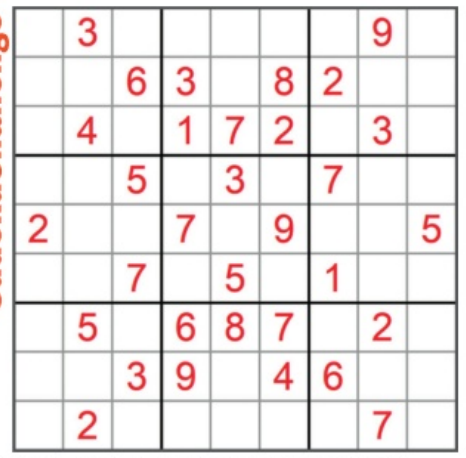
Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

04 Average; 05 Good; 06 Outstanding

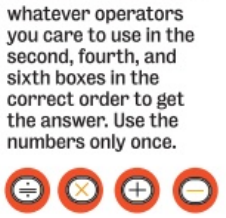
SudokuChallenge



To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.



Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Pocket is missing. 2. Pot is moved. 3. Foot is moved. 4. Boy's ear is different. 5. Boy's sleeve is different. 6. Bow is moved.

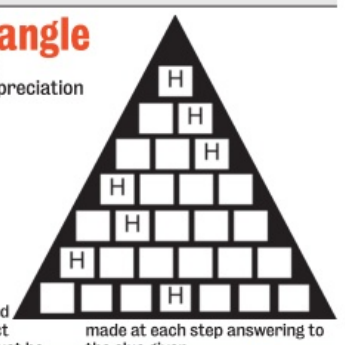
Riddler

In this teaser, I have given you a 9-letter word. Your job is to break up this word into 9 separate letters and place them on the dashes to spell a 7-letter word, a 5-letter word, and a 3-letter word. You can use each letter only once.

TEMPORARY _ N _ M _ R _ _ O _ O _ _ I _

Alpha triangle

1 Atomic number 1
2 Expression of appreciation
3 Cheer
4 Try a case
5 Be generous
6 Card game
7 Tub users?

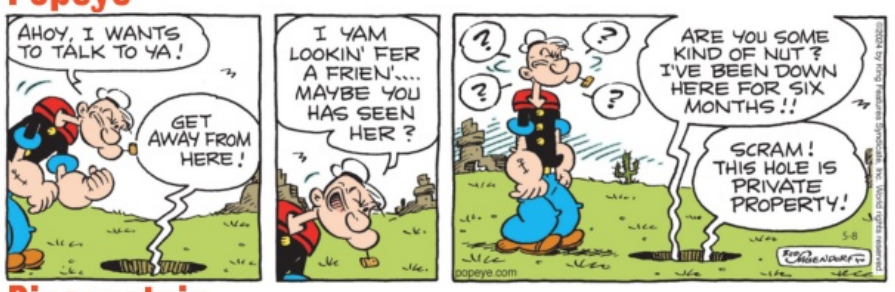


Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Popeye


AHOY, I WANTS TO TALK TO YA!
GET AWAY FROM HERE!
I YAM LOOKIN' FER A FRIEN'.... MAYBE YOU HAS SEEN HER?
ARE YOU SOME KIND OF NUT? I'VE BEEN DOWN HERE FOR SIX MONTHS!!
SCRAM! THIS HOLE IS PRIVATE PROPERTY!
popeye.com

Bizarrotrip

Your marches are all right, but they're hardly rousing.
Wayno & Piraro 10-29-24
JOHN PHILIP SO-SO
Dist. by King Features
BIZARRO.COM
©2024 BIZARRO STUDIOS

Diamond Lil

I'VE HAD TO BUY HALLOWEEN CANDY FIVE TIMES NOW!
WHY? BECAUSE HE'S A PIG
WHO SAID THAT? MY FAT PANTS
©2024 creators.com 10/29
www.creators.com

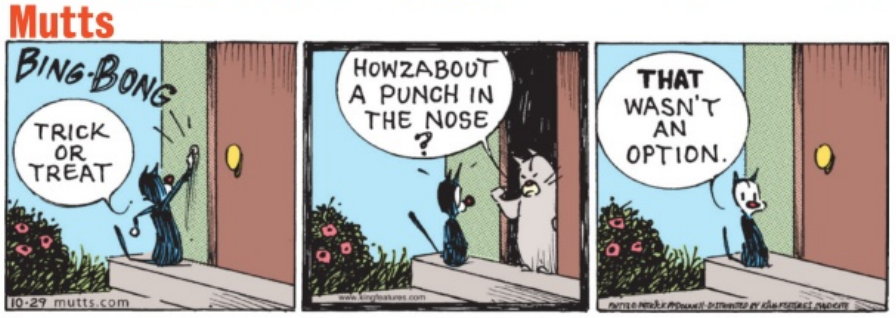
Hart of the city

GIVE US A MOMENT, PLEASE.
THE KIDS HAVE MOXIE FOR EVEN ASKING US TO SNEAK THEM INTO THE THEATER.
DO THEY EVEN CHECK IDs AT PG-13 MOVIES??
HAHA, NO. BUT WE'LL GET FREE SNACKS OUT OF THIS!
YOU'VE GOT A DEAL. WE'D LIKE MILK DUDS AND NACHOS.
HEART OF THE CITY © 2024 ABIDES MOMENT.
@DOOMICS.COM/HEARTOFTHECITY

Crankshaft

TALES FROM THE SCRYPTS
THE PIZZA MONSTER
THE GREAT PUMPKIN
THRILLS AND PUMPKIN CHILLS SINCE
HE NEVER SHOWED!
IS THAT A COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT?
WE'LL LET THE LAWYERS SORT IT OUT.
10-29 BATTUK & DAVIS
© 2024 Mediagraphics, Inc. Dist. by Andrews McMeel Syndication

Mutts



WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today, you may need to control your straightforwardness, as it could affect your relationships with those around you. You may plan to renovate your house and spend on buying some artifacts for your home. You are likely to enjoy a social event, which may help expand your network. Additionally, you may invest some capital in your family business.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Today, you may be blessed by the moon. After a good night's sleep, you will feel healthy and enjoy every moment. The moon will boost your confidence, which will reflect in your work. Old health issues may be resolved. You are also likely to help a needy person, which may increase your respect among those around you.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
Today, you may feel unhappy, dull, and unhealthy, which could impact your work. Delays in your current projects may lead to frustration and arrogance. It is advised to avoid adventurous trips or reckless driving. Lovebirds may experience a breakup.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
Today, you are likely to receive a big order, which may boost your business. With the help of an influential person, you may gain some benefits at work and could even expect a promotion. Job seekers may find a suitable job. You may also plan to renovate your house or office, enhancing your status. Romantic moments with your loved one may bring happiness.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Today, you may be busy at work. The workload could mentally exhaust you, preventing you from enjoying a family event or causing you to arrive late, which may affect domestic harmony. However, your efficiency will be praised by your seniors, potentially leading to a promotion in your current job.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
Today, you are blessed by your elders. Financial challenges from the past few days may now be resolved, and destiny may work in your favour. Stalled projects may restart automatically, and money that was stuck could be recovered. You may plan a religious trip with family members, which may strengthen your inner self. There is also a chance of an overseas or long-distance journey.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Today, you may be affected by a negative moon, which could make you upset and arrogant. Be prepared for sudden and unexpected changes in your daily routine. Profits may turn into losses, so it is advised to postpone investments for a few days. You may find yourself in a phase of self-exploration, leading you toward a deeper understanding of life.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
Today, you are blessed by the moon. Stuck money may be recovered, improving your financial health. You may hold a prime position at work, possibly leading a project. Incentives in the form of promotions may be on the way. Your understanding with your spouse is likely to improve, creating harmony in your domestic life.

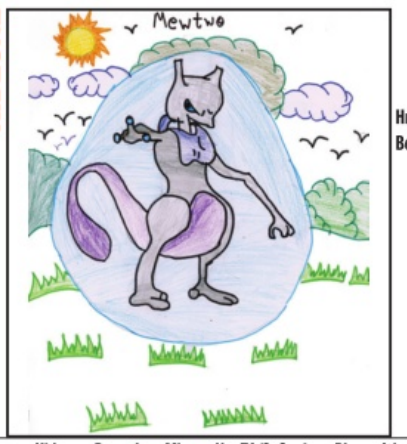
Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Today, you may resolve many issues through your effective communication skills. You may consider pursuing higher education to enhance your skills, which could benefit your career in the near future. Lovebirds may enjoy romantic moments. You will be able to control your opponents and rivals. Additionally, you may plan to apply for a home or vehicle loan

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Today, you may be occupied with your child's education, possibly even traveling for their academic needs. You may also consider changing your current job or pursuing higher education to advance your career. Good news related to a job interview may come your way. Lovebirds will enjoy happy moments together.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
Today, you may experience a change in your place or position. You are advised to carefully read any documents before signing them. Pay close attention to your parents' health. Investments in risky assets may lead to losses, so it is suggested to postpone any financial commitments by a few days.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Today, you are blessed by the moon, making you energetic and decisive in business matters. Your subordinates may help you complete a project ahead of schedule, increasing trust in the workplace. Disputes with siblings may now be resolved. Employees may receive incentives or promotions.

KIDZONE



Hrishikesh, Bengaluru

Ananya Vastare, Bengaluru

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M
1/(46/5 - 3/(3 - 2)/3))
1/(46/5 - 3/(1/3))
1/(46/5 - 9/1)
1/((46 - 45)/5)
1/(1/5)
5/1 = 5

QUOTE UNCODE
The most perfidious way of harming a cause consists of defending it deliberately with faulty arguments.

BULL'S EYE
creep, crepe, crept, erect, PERFECT, PREFECT

FAST FIVE

S	C	R	U	B
P	L	E	N	A
O	A	S	I	S
U	R	A	T	E
T	O	W	E	D

STRIKE OUT

A	V	E	R	W	A	R	T	A	M	P				
C	A		E		A		L		L					
T	E	R	E	S	A		D	A	H	L	I	A		
E	N		C	L	A	I	M		U		Y			
D	E	E	M	E	D		I	B	E	R	I	A		
I		N				T								
N	O	E	L		D	O	S		U	S	E	D		
O		N			E		D		T		N			
S	P	E	L	L	S		A	G	E	N	D	A		
I		H		A	A	R	O	N		A		H		
N	O	T	I	C	E		L	I	L	L	I	E		
U		A	M	I		L		H	E	S		N		
I		D	I	P		A		U	A	E		L		
N		A	T	A	L	O	S	S				O		
I		N												
S	I	N	N	E	D		O	C	C	U	L	T		
A		E		N				X		A		I		
P		C	U	I	S	I	N	E		L	E	H		
T	U	T	U		A	L	M	I	G	H	T	Y		
I		I			L		A		E		L			
N	E		O		A		A		I					

QUICK

I	S	S	U	E	D		E	V	A	D	E	S		
D		T		I		D		E		E		S		
G	R	I	T	E	R	I	A		E	R	E	I		
A		E		C		R		E		M				
O	W	E		T	A	N	G	L	E	D		R		
T		C		P				E		N		O		
S	I	N	N	E	D		O	C	C	U	L	T		
A		E		N				X		A		I		
P		C	U	I	S	I	N	E		L	E	H		
I		I			L		A		E		L			
N	E		O		A		A		I					

MENSA PUZZLE
H. Working from top to bottom, letters are written in pairs. Take the 2 digit numerical value of the first letter and add the 2 digits together. Write the letter with this numerical value in the next space down. Continue in this way down the line.

RIDDLER Anymore, motor & rip

SUDOKU

1	3	2	4	6	5	8	9	7
5	7	6	3	9	8	2	1	4
8	4	9	1	7	2	5	3	6
4	6	5	2	3	1	7	8	9
2	1	8	7	4	9	3	6	5
3	9	7	8	5	6	1	4	2
9	5	1	6	8	7	4	2	3
7	8	3	9	2	4	6	5	1
6	2	4	5	1	3	9	7	8

GO FIGURE
Easy
7 - 7 + 1 + 8 = 9
Medium
3 + 5 + 4 + 5 = 17
Hard
3 x 3 \ 3 + 6 = 9

ALPHA TRIANGLE
H, Ah, Rah, Hear, Share, Hearts, Heart's, Bathers.

LOOP

KAKURO

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'My best friend': Rasha talks about mom's influence

Rasha reveals how Raveena drew the line when she was naughty as a child

In January 2025, Rasha Thadani, daughter of Raveena Tandon, made her Bollywood debut in Abhishek Kapoor's historical drama Azaad, alongside Ajay Devgn's nephew Aaman Devgan. In a recent interview, Rasha recalled her childhood mischief and her close bond with her mother, admitting she sometimes faced disciplinary action from Raveena.

Talking to Instant Bollywood, Rasha referred to her mother, Raveena Tandon, as "my best friend" and described her as a "cool mom." Rasha emphasised the friendly bond they share, noting that Raveena was strict during her childhood but became more relaxed as she grew older.

The actress shared insights about her upbringing, acknowledging that while she was a mischievous child, her mother, Raveena, always corrected her when necessary, stating, "That's a mother at the end of the day." She revealed that Raveena was strict during her younger years, but once Rasha turned 14, her mother "chilled out a lot". Rasha hoped to have learned from her mistakes by that age; but, she recognized that if she hadn't, she would still face her mother's reprimands.

Rasha shared memories of her childhood, mentioning that her mother would often tap her hand and tell her to "stop it". She admitted she liked to surprise her parents with her antics and would agree to her mother's advice but end up doing what she was told not to. She talked about how she can openly discuss boys with Raveena, calling it a cool part of their bond. **–ETimes**

Sonam's heartfelt tribute to Rohit Bal

At the Blenders Pride X FDCI Fashion Tour 2025, Bollywood actress Sonam Kapoor took to the runway with deep emotion, paying a heartfelt tribute to the late legendary fashion designer Rohit Bal.

The event, held on February 1 at Le Meridien in Gurugram, was more than just a fashion showcase—it was a poignant celebration of the life and legacy of the designer, who passed away at the age of 63.

Sonam, known for her impeccable style and admiration for Indian couture, walked the ramp in a heavily embellished ivory outfit designed by Bal himself. The regal ensemble, adorned with intricate embroidery and signature detailing, was a testament to the designer's unparalleled craftsmanship and timeless aesthetic.

As she gracefully moved down the runway, Sonam was visibly emotional, reflecting the deep impact Bal had not only on the fashion industry but also on those who had the privilege of knowing and working with him.

The atmosphere at the event was filled with nostalgia and reverence as industry veterans, models, and fashion enthusiasts gathered to honor Bal's extraordinary contributions.

–ETimes

Karla in more trouble over shade to Selena

Emilia Perez' actress Karla Sofia Gascon, who is facing backlash owing to her racist tweets, has apparently shaded her co-star Selena Gomez in the past.

Karla reportedly shared negative comments about Selena, reports 'People' magazine.

In a since-deleted tweet from 2022, Gascon, 52, called Gomez, 32, a "rich rat" while discussing her rumored feud with Hailey Bieber, The Latin Times reported.

According to the outlet, Gascon negatively commented on Selena while quoting a post from the Mexican outlet Reforma which featured a photo of Selena and Bieber, 28, reuniting at the Annual Academy Museum Gala in October 2022, seemingly squashing rumors of any feud between the pair.

As per 'People', the tweet that was allegedly shared on Gascon's account, which has now been deactivated, read translated from Spanish, "She's a rich rat who plays the poor b** whenever she can and will never stop bothering her ex-boyfriend and his wife", referring to Selena Gomez's ex Justin Bieber and wife Hailey. The outlet also alleged that prior to posting the tweet, the first-time Oscar nominee had shared a post announcing that she would be appearing alongside Selena in 'Emilia Perez' earlier that year, suggesting that she knew she'd be working with Gomez when she made the remarks. **–IANS**

BEGUR COLONY (KANNADA)

3.0 RATING ★★★★★

- **DIRECTOR** Flying King Manju
- **ACTORS** Flying King Manju, Rajeev Hanu, Posani Murali Krishna, Pallavi Parva, Kirti Bhandari, and Bala Rajwadi.
- **CERTIFICATION** UA16+
- **Duration** 150 minutes

All for a playground

Director Flying King Manju deserves praise for his choice of subject for this movie. It is a known fact that many schools and colonies or wards in Bengaluru do not have playgrounds thus depriving the luxury of playtime for many children. The movie highlights how politicians and land mafia are ever ready to encroach land meant for a playground.

However, Flying King Manju, who plays two characters and is director too, looks tired and lacks focus throughout the movie. He plays the father and the son in the movie. A major portion of the movie was shot in and around a slum. Though the producer and director are free to select actors of their choice for this movie, the selection of Telugu character actor Posani Murali Krishna is not justified. His lip movement is not in sync with dialogues.

The movie is about two friends Raghava (Rajeev Hanu) and Gully Shiva (Flying King Manju) who want a playground for children of Begur Colony. They want their elected representative Mune Gowda (Posani Murali Krishna) to allocate the government land for the playground. Meanwhile, some people create misunderstandings between Raghava and Gully Shiva. Mune Gowda asks Gully Shiva to install his brother's statue but the latter installs Dr BR Ambedkar's statue. What happens to Raghava and Gully Shiva is what Begur Colony is all about.

Most of the cast are newcomers and need to improve their acting skills. Veteran character actor Bala Rajawadi has nothing to do in this movie except appearing in a few scenes.

It is worth a watch, but only if you have no other plans.

–Y Maheswara Reddy